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**Statement submitted by Yakutia — Our Opinion, a
non-governmental organization in consultative status with the
Economic and Social Council***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

For the successful implementation of SDGs at the local level, it is necessary to ensure participation of local communities in decision-making process.

Developed countries are most successful in achieving SDGs. However, in developing and transitional countries, such as Russia and other post-Soviet countries, the situation is complex.

Effective participation of citizens in management of state affairs in such countries is difficult, because they are dominated by corruption, irresponsibility and formalism.

The constitutional norm that people are only source of power, according to which people exercise their power through elections and state bodies, is declarative. Activities of State bodies and Parliament of Russia are subordinated to selfish interests of the minority — corrupt officials and oligarchs.

Decision-making without taking into account the population's interests is particularly negatively reflected in remote and northern regions.

Let's present some actual problems with example of Yakutsk town, the capital of the Republic Sakha (Yakutia). Decision-making in Yakutsk is based on corruption, irresponsibility and formalism.

A number of acute problems remain unsolved in Yakutsk:

- 1) The lack of clean drinking water due to the refusal of the authorities to build a water treatment plant.
- 2) The possibility of catastrophic collapse of buildings due to melting permafrost and the authorities' refusal to conduct fortification works.
- 3) The possibility of construction of environmentally hazardous industrial objects on the Lena River near Yakutsk without taking into account population's position.

On the first issue (lack of clean drinking water) a paradoxical situation arose: Yakutsk's population lives on one of the world's largest Lena River, but cannot drink clean water from a tap. People are forced to drink polluted water or buy water from entrepreneurs at commercial prices. This causes an increase in diseases of kidney, gastrointestinal tract and other internal organs.

The second issue (catastrophic collapse of buildings) is associated with global warming and construction features in Yakutia. The foundations of most buildings are piles installed in permafrost. Melting permafrost soils causes the loss of strength of buildings (bearing capacity of piles). It requires carrying out of strengthening works and water disposal.

Melting permafrost soils against the background of the possibility of earthquakes in Yakutia can lead to the catastrophic collapse of buildings and mass death of people.

These two issues can be solved by spending funds on construction of a water treatment plant, carrying out work to strengthen buildings and water disposal. However, the priorities of local authorities in expenditure of public budget funds contradict the population's interests.

Transition from global to local problem solving and successful integration of local communities into the decision-making process have a number of problems and requires intensification of international community efforts.

Many problems are at the junction of three aspects: economic, social and environmental. These components are at the heart of the Concept of Sustainable Development and are best revealed in seventeen SDGs.

Therefore, the best way to solve problems at the local level is through:

- progressive implementation of the concept of Sustainable Development;
- effective participation of local communities in decision-making processes.